



“VWI goes to the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna”

Thursday, 7 May 2020, 12:00 pm

Please note that the event will take place online. In order to participate, please send an email to anmeldung@vwi.ac.at by 4 May 2020, you will then receive a link and a password.

Katarzyna PERSON

THE SEARCH FOR RETRIBUTION AMONG POLISH JEWS IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-WAR WORLD

Transnational Aspects



In this presentation, cross-border aspects of individual searches for retribution for crimes committed during the Second World War in East-Central Europe will be discussed, focusing specifically on the immediate postwar responses of prewar Polish Jewish citizens to wartime norm-violating behaviours. As Polish Jews left Poland and settled abroad, the presentation will cross the traditional historiographical postwar divide, showing how people and their memories moved between East and West just before the Iron Curtain came down.

Using a microhistorical approach and focusing on individuals and prewar communities allows for an exploration of how concepts and stories crossed borders in the immediate postwar period, how they changed in the course of transfer, and how they linked people to their country of origin. The presentation will also highlight, within the search for justice, the individual attempts to trace the very effective informal networks of information exchange that mirrored the postwar migration paths of Jews, while also analysing the exchange of information between institutions in postwar Poland and those in Western Europe, the United States, and South America.

Commented by Kerstin von LINGEN

Katarzyna Person is a historian of Eastern European Jewish history and an Assistant Professor at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. She is currently a Research Fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI). She received her doctorate from the University of London and has held postdoctoral fellowships at Yad Vashem, the Center for Jewish History in New York, and the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich (Humboldt postdoctoral fellowship). She has written three monographs and over twenty articles on the Holocaust and its aftermath in Eastern Europe.

Kerstin von Lingen is a professor at the Institute for Contemporary History at the University of Vienna, holding the Professorship of Genocide, Violence and Dictatorship. From 2013 to 2017, she led a research group at Heidelberg University focussing on war crimes trials in Asia. Her publications include two monographs in English and three edited volumes on war crimes trials. In German, she published the multi-authored volumes *Kriegserfahrung und nationale Identität in Europa*, Paderborn 2009, and co-edited *Zwangsarbeit als Kriegsressource in Europa und Asien*, Paderborn 2014 with Klaus Gestwa. Her research focusses on the aftermath of violence, including trials and compensation, apology and memory politics, but also migration and resettlement schemes.

Photo: Hagana Ship - Jewish State at Haifa Port (1947), © Wikimedia Commons

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